

# **Job-Loss Recovery Program**

## **Brief Program Description**

Research has shown that unemployment is a major life stressor that places people at high risk for negative mental and physical health outcomes. Theorists have described unemployment as a trauma or major loss event that induces psychological reactions similar to bereavement or terminal illness. Unemployed individuals have had documented increases in depression, anger, worry, and threats to identity, self-concept, and self-esteem.

The Job-Loss Recovery Program™ utilizes self-generated imagery. The imagery intervention is composed of four components: emotional expression, ideal self, imaginal rehearsal of a successful job interview, and positive growth. First, participants mentally experience, express, and resolve thoughts and emotions surrounding the job loss, followed by the construction of a valued successful possible self. Third, participants mentally rehearse competent performance at a job interview while imagining attaining their desired job. Lastly, participants are guided in constructing psychological and spiritual growth opportunities, such as an inner mentor. Based on past theory and research it was expected that the four-component career transition program would enhance mental and emotional responses to job loss and facilitate reemployment relative to a placebo control group.

## **Program Strategies**

Study participants in the intervention group actively listened to two separate audiotapes each played for three consecutive sessions. Both tapes began with passive muscle relaxation, followed by an imaginal trip to a so-called safe place. The first tape guided participants through emotional expression and creation of a positive possible self by first instructing participants to mentally revisit the scene of the layoff and allow their feelings to surface without inhibition. Participants imagined expressing these feelings to a company representative who listened and responded empathetically. In the possible self segment participants envisioned a version of themselves that was wise, loving, and successful, and then imagined being that person.

In the second tape subjects mentally rehearsed a successful job interview and participated in a spiritual and growth segment. Participants were given the opportunity to observe, rehearse, and develop confidence in their job interviewing skills. They imagined watching a movie of themselves in a job interview and could replay or rewind any scene. The growth segment promoted cognitive reframing of the job loss and participants imagined communicating with an inner mentor and opening themselves to positive growth and new possibilities.

**Population Focus**

The target population was unemployed business people recruited from four outplacement firms and one state unemployment career center in California.

**Suitable Settings**

The intervention is suitable for implementation at outplacement firms and other job-search support organizations where subjects are recruited.

**Required Resources**

A new and improved mental imagery program recording is available as a set of two compact discs containing all six program sessions. In addition, Dr. Joseph authored a book based on the program. It's entitled, "The Job-Loss Recovery Guide: A Proven Program For Getting Back to Work – Fast!" (New Harbinger Publications, July 2003; ISBN: 1-57224-353-8). The book and companion recording are available at [www.JobLossRecovery.com](http://www.JobLossRecovery.com) and by the toll-free order line at 1-888-557-7776. The book is also widely available in bookstores and at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

**Implementation Timeline**

Participants attended six 20-min sessions over a two-week period.

**Outcomes**

Evaluation of this program revealed the following:

- Career transition program participants increased their perceptions of control over job loss significantly more than placebo control participants from before the intervention to immediate posttest.
- There was a significant increase in perceived control in the intervention group from pretest to posttest. In addition, significant effects were found for self-esteem, depression, and anger.
- At the 2-month followup, 16 of 26 (62%) career transition group participants were re-employed versus 3 of 26 (12%) control participants. At the 4-month followup, 18 (69%) career transition group participants were re-employed versus 10 (38%) control participants.

## **Contact Information**

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

### **Program Developer**

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